

SOME GOLDEN DAYBREAK

17 Sermons on the Second Coming of CHRIST

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CHAPTER SEVENTEEN

The Christian's Watchword

"Let your moderation be known unto all men. The Lord is at hand" (Philippians 4:5).

THERE WAS a day when CHRIST led His disciples to the Mount of Olives, gave His commission to them, and began to rise into the sky. As the disciples watched Him a cloud received Him out of their sight.

As the gaze of the disciples was still fastened upon the disappearing LORD, two men in white apparel appeared and began to speak. They said, **"Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven; This same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven."**

Following these words they returned to Jerusalem and began a prayer service which lasted for ten days. On the day of Pentecost the disciples were all in one place, with one accord. The HOLY SPIRIT came in mighty power upon them.

They began to witness of the life, the death, and the resurrection of JESUS CHRIST. Thousands were saved. In the days to come, they continued their faithful witnessing of the LORD. But as they worked, they never forgot the promise of His coming.

Therefore, we find that the early Christians lived and labored in the light of the blessed hope. They suffered nameless persecutions for the CHRIST they looked for daily.

Now when Paul wrote to the Christians in Philippi, he had much to say about the second coming of the Lord JESUS.

In the fourth chapter he began to deal with very practical matters.

"Therefore, my brethren dearly beloved and longed for, my joy and crown, so stand fast in the Lord, my dearly beloved. I beseech Euodias, and beseech Syntyche, that they be of the same mind in the Lord. And I intreat thee also, true yokefellow, help those women which laboured with me in the gospel, with Clement also, and with other my fellowlabourers, whose names are in the book of life." (Philippians 4:1-3).

As we come to verse 4, we find the apostle returning to his theme of rejoicing, for he said:

"Rejoice in the Lord alway: and again I say, Rejoice."

In verse 5 he states:

"Let your moderation [or your gentleness] be known unto all men. The Lord is at hand."

That expression, "**The Lord is at hand**," seems to have been a favorite one of the apostle and the watchword of the early Christians. They used the nearness of the LORD, both as to space and time, to keep their lives in tune.

Paul said, "**The Lord is at hand**," and since He is at hand, there are three suggestions I want to make to you as Christian people.

First, he said, "**Be careful for nothing**." Since the LORD is coming soon, it is exceedingly important for us not to be careful and anxious about minor matters. Since the LORD is at hand, there is not time for foolish worry.

Second, "**In every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God**." Nothing that troubles us is too trifling to bring to the LORD. We should pray about everything.

Third, pray, "**with thanksgiving**." Please notice that he said "**in every thing**" pray and give thanks, "**for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you**" (I Thessalonians 5:18). It is easy to give thanks when we receive the things that please us, but otherwise it is sometimes hard. When our plans fail and when our friends betray us, it is not so easy to give thanks unto GOD. Let us remember to give thanks for everything that comes our way.

Yes, the LORD is at hand. He is an ever-present CHRIST. We need to lean upon Him, rest in Him, and fear not. He is at hand in His second coming. If Paul felt that the LORD was at hand, then how much more should we feel it today in the light of His soon coming to receive us.

There are three practical admonitions I would like to give.

I. The LORD Is at Hand; Therefore, Be Prayerful

"Take ye heed, watch and pray: for ye know not when the time is" (Mark 13:33).

The LORD is coming; therefore, we need to be watching and praying. The sore need of every Christian in this present hour is more prayer. We need prayer which digs down deep into our hearts. We need to pray burning, sincere, heartfelt prayers which reach the throne of GOD and allow the searchlight of the HOLY SPIRIT to shine into our hearts. The men and women who have been greatly used of GOD in ages past have always been mighty in prayer. As you read the biographies of the famous, the spirit of prayer predominates in every life.

JESUS, the SON of GOD, took time to pray. In the midst of His greatest activity and opportunity

for service, we read that He withdrew Himself from the multitude and sought out a solitary place where He could pray. In the Garden of Gethsemane the Saviour prayed in such anguish of spirit that His sweat became blood. There are not many of us who are willing to pay such a supreme price in order to have power with GOD. And yet we must remind ourselves that this was the all-powerful SON of GOD who felt the need of prayer.

Can it be that many people who are gifted, talented, and well equipped for the service of GOD fail because they do not pray? It is the tragedy of this hour that many people seem to think that if they know the mechanics of serving GOD, that is all that is necessary. May this thought be far removed from your minds. No service is acceptable unto GOD unless it is rendered upon the wings of prayer. Therefore, may we withdraw ourselves to the secret place and there pray until we have an answer.

What foolishness that we seek the advice of our friends and families before we have even spent as much as five minutes in earnest prayer. What foolishness that we would trust the advice of a mere human when we could have the leadership of an all-wise GOD.

The LORD is at hand; therefore, be prayerful. Pray about the small things; Pray about everything that will affect your life in relation to others. It is not only hard; it is impossible to live a godly Christian life without prayer. And yet, how many are trying to do it!

II. The LORD Is at Hand; Therefore, Be Patient

The Word of GOD teaches this very fact. It is repeated twice in two verses in James 5:7, 8:

"Be patient therefore, brethren, unto the coming of the Lord. Behold, the husbandman waiteth for the precious fruit of the earth, and hath long patience for it, until he receive the early and latter rain. Be ye also patient; establish your hearts: for the coming of the Lord draweth nigh."

The LORD is at hand; therefore be patient in your Christian labors: It is necessary that there be a sowing time in order to reap a harvest. We who are workers for JESUS must remember that we cannot always reap, but we must sow as well. We must be as a farmer who waits for the season of harvest.

Be patient in hardships, for the LORD is at hand. All of our worry and concern will fade into thin air when JESUS appears. Today you are troubled about everything, but if CHRIST should come in this moment, every worry would be over, and as a Christian you would rise to meet Him. Therefore, **"Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God."** And here is His promise, **"And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus."**

Be patient in sorrow; the LORD is at hand. Paul believed this, and it sustained him through many dark hours. He gave this word in encouragement to the Christians in Thessalonica. It was to them that he said:

"But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him. For this we say unto you by the word of the LORD, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the LORD shall not prevent them which are asleep. For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord Wherefore comfort one another with these words" (I Thessalonians 4:13-18).

In the time of sorrow there is no comfort that can equal the promise of His coming, for the day that JESUS comes, the dead in Christ shall rise, the living shall be changed, and there will be a glorious reunion in the sky. The week this is written many members of our church have been saddened in the going of three of our fellow Christians. We have followed the caskets to the cemeteries. We have shed our tears with the sorrowing families. But listen, the LORD is at hand! His coming is near, and in that day we shall see our loved ones face to face again.

Be patient in your differences with others, for the LORD is at hand. This is what James said to the people after exhorting them to be patient:

"Grudge not one against another, brethren, lest ye be condemned: behold, the judge standeth before the door. Take, my brethren, the prophets, who have spoken in the name of the LORD, for an example of suffering affliction, and of patience. Behold, we count them happy which endure. Ye have heard of the patience of Job, and have seen the end of the Lord; that the Lord is very pitiful, and of tender mercy" (James 5:9-11).

In the same manner, the Apostle Paul exhorted Euodias and Syntyche - that they be of the same mind in the LORD. Why do we make so much of differences when the LORD is coming, and at His coming, every difference will be made straight and right?

As a Christian looking for the Lord JESUS, pass by the slights and insults which are given you. Your attention is fastened on something a thousand times bigger. Don't try to get revenge against those who mistreat you. Leave it all in the hands of the Lord. Pray for your enemies. Love them that despitefully use you and be patient until the coming of the Lord.

III. The Lord Is at Hand; Therefore, Be Pure

You may be asking, "Do we have any Scripture for this?" I can answer, "Yes, the very finest and strongest statements exhort us to be pure, for He is coming."

"Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God: therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew him not. Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is. And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure" (I John 3:1-3).

Paul gives the same thought in the book of Titus, chapter 2, when he said:

"Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world; Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ; Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works."

The Apostle Lord JESUS had the same thought when he said:

"Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness." (II Peter 3:11).

In the light of the coming of our LORD, the Word of GOD calls for purity of speech, purity of thought, and purity of conduct.

To be pure of heart, mind, speech, and conduct is to be ready when He comes.

- To be pure of heart and life is to shed abroad an influence which will bless others.
- To be pure of heart is to be filled with the HOLY SPIRIT; as a matter of fact, there is no other way for God's HOLY SPIRIT to fill and pervade your life except through separation from sin and the world, and purity of life.
- To be pure of heart, life, and conduct is to be used of GOD, for GOD must have a clean vessel.

Listen to these words of the Apostle Paul:

"Let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity. But in a great house there are not only vessels of gold and of silver, but also of wood and of earth; and some to honour, and some to dishonour. If a man therefore purge himself from these, he shall be a vessel unto honour, sanctified, and meet for the master's use, and prepared unto every good work" (II Timothy 2:19-21).

Is there a spot upon your life which would make you an unfit vessel for the Master's use? If so, then claim the promise of I John 1:9, **"If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."**

It is true that we make mistakes and that our lives are often touched by the impurities of a sinful world, but that is no reason for us to continue in such a state, for GOD has given us a way whereby we can be cleansed, and whereby we can be pure in His sight. The Lord is at hand, and John says, **"And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure."**

Let me call Christian people to a new place of separation and dedication of life. If you are to be used of GOD, there must be a separation from the world and a dedication to the work of GOD.

In closing, let me press upon lost people the significance of the statement, **"The Lord is at hand."** Are you ready to meet Him? No, you are not ready, but you can be. He is at hand now to save you, and He will come one day to receive you unto Himself. The way of salvation is plain.

No person need miss the way; "**Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish**", "**Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved.**"

CHRIST in plain and simple words set forth the way of salvation when He said, "**He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.**"

Yes, the LORD is at hand. It is my prayer that you, dear reader, are ready to meet Him.

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